

# Underground *news*

## THE LAKE COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF UTILITIES

SEWER

SOLID WASTE

WATER

### *quality as a priority*

By: Matt Armand, Main Office

Let it never be said that the Lake County Department of Utilities is not focused on providing quality customer service! Although customer service has always been a component of our operations, as of March 2014 our department has embarked on a formal



method of tracking the level of customer service we deliver.

With the assistance of various departments, such as the Billing Office, the West End Service Center and GLK, surveys are provided to customers who have interaction with our employees. If we do not hear from a customer after ten business days, our Administrative Office staff contacts

them personally. Over the past five months, customers have commented that our staff is courteous, polite, professional, timely, efficient, and knowledgeable. In addition, customers are impressed that our Billing Office initiates contact when water consumption appears higher than normal. In terms of overall customer service, 87% of respondents rates us as "excellent," 12% as "good" and 1% as "average," "fair" or "poor." Whether the comment be good or bad, each one is reviewed and evaluated upon receipt, and all comments are assessed by the Customer Service Committee on a quarterly basis. Surveys can be completed by hard copy and mailed in, or they can be found on our homepage and submitted electronically. To all of you who are committed to delivering quality and customer satisfaction—thank you!

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Customer service is not a department, it's everyone's job.

*Anonymous*

### *integrity*

By: Rick Martin, Main Office



Integrity is the concept of consistently doing the right things for the right reasons. Your everyday actions, values, principles, and expectations all culminate to form a unique blend of who you are. No matter how difficult a situation or decision may be, if your core values are authentic and unwavering, you will respond in a consistent and credible manner. Always let your actions reflect your words—do what you say you will do, and hold your word as your bond. No matter how unpleasant or challenging it may seem, speaking the truth will ultimately earn you trust, respect and dependability. In life and in work, boldly dare to make the right decisions; and, allow your personal compass to be guided by integrity, truth and consistency of character.



## what's that green stuff in the water?

By: Cindy Leonello, Main Office

Have you ever wondered why the water in certain areas of the lake appears that pea-soup green color during specific times of the year? No—its not the result of a toxic spill ; rather, it's commonly known as a harmful algae bloom (HAB). Despite their interesting color, algae blooms are considered "harmful" because they may produce poisons or toxins that can cause illness and irritation. Algae Blooms occur when increased levels of phosphorus and nitrogen enter the lake, and are typically more severe in the Western part of Lake Erie where agricultural runoff is high. Significant rain events can also contribute to the spread and severity of the blooms. Even though the term "blue-green algae" is often used to describe this phenomenon, some HAB's are actually cyanobacteria. Besides agricultural run off, there are other factors that contribute to the severity of the bloom, such as water depth, temperature, sunlight, wind, and water currents.

That being said, the LCDU still has its share of taste and odor problems resulting from the yearly algae bloom. Both sewer and water operations are impacted by algae blooms, which usually peak in mid-September. Our wastewater treatment plants are responsible for ensuring that we continue to reduce the amount of phosphorus released into Lake Erie. Bob Shelby, Director of Wastewater Operations, says that "our discharged water quality is strictly monitored by EPA regulations and treatment guidelines".



*Satellite image of 2011 bloom, the worst bloom in recent years, which impacted over half of the lake shore*



*A Lake Erie algae bloom in September 2009*

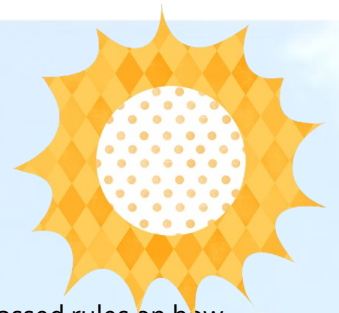
Our water treatment plants continually monitor algae counts and adjust treatment procedures as needed to ensure that the highest quality of water is delivered to our customers each day. Specifically, we perform weekly algae counts, we conduct taste and odor tests on a weekly basis, we check pH levels every two hours, and we review satellite images during periods of higher risk. Ken Stoneman, Superintendent at the Bacon Road water treatment facility, added that "activated carbon is increased to combat the effects of algae growth; it acts as a large sponge to absorb unpleasant odors and taste common during algae season."

The Lake County Department of Utilities continues to be proactive and strives each day to provide quality service to ensure that public health is a top priority.



# *a brief history of garbage*

By: Tim Gourley, Solid Waste



What do you do with the stuff that you have when you don't want it anymore? You throw it out of course. We've been throwing things away since the beginning of time. Archeologists love it. They look for things our distant relatives left behind: broken arrowheads, shards of pottery, Civil War belt buckles, whatever!

Things got messy as more and more people threw away more and more stuff.

Then the stuff we threw away changed. No longer could you take your garbage out to the local pig farm. The pigs picked through the paper until they got to the food. That's what garbage was at the turn of the twentieth century—mostly paper and food wastes. We developed plastics, formed foam products, and treated lumber (to name a few). Things just didn't break down like they used to.

Gradually people started to look for unused places to throw their garbage into. They found areas: the edge of town, hillsides, ravines, swamps, old mines. Items got "dumped" there. Many communities had their own dump. People kept throwing things out. Other people, birds, wildlife, and rats found things they wanted while looking through the garbage. Occasionally the dumps caught on fire. See the case of Centralia, Pa for the most infamous dump fire.



The Ohio Department of Health passed rules on how refuse was to be handled in 1968. Dumps were replaced with "Sanitary Landfills". They introduced the ideas of covering the waste every night to keep fires, smells, and nuisance animal numbers down. Open burning at the landfill was forbidden. Unauthorized people and scavenging articles from the waste was also against the

rules. These first laws where on a handful of pages.

In the 1970's everything changed. I guess maybe a river catching on fire opened a few eyes. The USEPA and the Ohio EPA were formed. The Ohio EPA passed a new set of laws in 1976 building on the original 1968 ones. The new laws focused on where

landfills shouldn't be sited (mines, within 1000 feet of a well, at least 5 feet above ground water), ground and surface water protection, and how landfills should be closed.

In Lake County the new Bailer and Landfill facility also opened in 1976 on Blasé Nemeth Road in Painesville Township. The facility included a large enclosed building where garbage would be dumped, pushed onto a conveyer belt, fed into a large compactor unit where it would be compressed and wired together to form a large bail, and then loaded onto a truck to be taken to the landfill just north of the building.



# CONGRATULATIONS

## *all-star teacher*

By: Matt Armand, Main Office

Major League Baseball, Target Corp and PEOPLE announced 30 winners in the "Target Presents PEOPLE All-Star Teachers" campaign, which celebrates remarkable current and retired teachers who make an impact on the lives of their students and communities. Jacqui Spetrino, a teacher at Dale R. Rice Elementary School in Mentor, and wife of Jay Spetrino, Superintendent of the Aquarius Water Treatment Plant, was selected by fans to represent the Cleveland Indians. She has always been a strong advocate for children, and she passes her love of art to every child she teaches. Jacqui and her husband, Jay, both participated in All-Star Week activities, and Jacqui was recognized during the pre-game ceremony of the 2014 MLB All-Star Game on July 15th at Target Field in Minneapolis.

In addition to all the fun festivities, the message of this event is much deeper. It is part of a much larger effort to celebrate teachers and raise awareness about the importance of education. Teachers at every level hold such a vital role in society. They motivate, inspire, challenge, and ultimately shape the lives of their students. The Lake County Department of Utilities extends a big congratulations to Jacqui for winning this incredible award; but more importantly, we congratulate her for her outstanding commitment and dedication to educating our youth!

***"It is the supreme art of the teacher to awaken joy in creative expression and knowledge."***

Albert Einstein



## *meet our new LCDU employees*

By: Cindy Leonello, Main Office



### **Matt Sutch**

System Maintenance, Aquarius Service Center

Hired: May 19, 2014

About: Matt has been a Lake County resident his entire life. His family is still in the area, and he enjoys riding dirt bikes and fishing



### **Roy Fryman**

Compost Operator, GLK Facility

Hired: June 16, 2014

About: Roy grew up in Brookside, Ohio, and has lived in Lake County for roughly 20 years. He enjoys gardening, home improvement projects, and riding his Harley



### **Scott Snyder**

System Maintenance, Aquarius Service Center

Hired: July 28, 2014

About: Scott lives in Concord, and has been a Lake County resident his entire life. He is a part-time fireman for the City of Mentor, and enjoys landscaping, gardening, and spending time with his wife and two sons



### **Bill Herron**

Compost Operator, GLK Facility

Hired: June 2, 2014

About: Bill was born and raised in Lake County, and he currently lives in Perry. He enjoys racing, camping and gardening



# Welcome to our TEAM

# anniversaries

By: Cindy Leonello, Main Office



## 1 YEAR

Tom Advey, 6/6/13

Kara Linsenmeier, 6/3/13

Chris Watts, 6/3/13

Jeff Gibbon, 7/15/13

Nicole Erkkila, 7/19/13

Norris Walters, 7/29/13

## 5 YEAR

Damian Sherwood, 8/3/09

## 10 YEAR

Scottie Burke, 6/1/04

Brian Rihtar, 6/28/14

## 25 YEAR

John Clarkson, 6/15/89

Brad Frederick, 7/10/89

Tom Rigby, 7/10/89

Mark Tenkku, 8/21/89

*comments or suggestions regarding the newsletter or website?*

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*Brought to you by The Lake County Department of Utilities Newsletter Committee*



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Seated from left to right: Nancy Hamblin, Cindy Leonello, Sarah Cerovski



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